REMARKS

The Office Action of March 23, 2006 has been received and its contents carefully considered.

The present Amendment cancels dependent claim 12, and transfers its subject matter to independent claim 11. The Amendment also revises the dependency of claim 13 in view of the cancellation of claim 12.

The Office Action rejects all of the claims for anticipation by US patent 6,373,421 to Uchiyama et al. This reference will hereafter simply be called "Uchiyama" for the sake of convenience. For the reasons discussed below, it is respectfully submitted that all of the independent claims are patentable over this reference.

The "conversion unit" paragraph in independent claim1 provides that "the last unit of data of the immediately preceding data block will be concatenated with the first unit of data of the immediately following data block along a smooth amplitude-varying curve." The same language appears in independent claim 6, and a similar limitation appears in independent claim 11 ("...so as to smooth transitions between the data blocks of the second sequence"). The Office Action supports its rejection, in part, by relying on the passage at column 5 of Uchiyama, lines 13-39. However, this passage is part of a larger discussion of what is shown in Uchiyama's Figure 6, and it will be apparent from Uchiyama's Figure 6(B) that the technique described in the above-noted passage in Uchiyama's column 5 does not avoid discontinuities between blocks of data.

Independent claim 1 also provides that "the amplitude-varying curve is calculated to a simply increasing or decreasing function," and independent claim 6 has similar language. Independent claim 11 now provides that the amplitude units of data adjacent

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boundaries is varied "in accordance with a monotonic increasing or monotonic decreasing function." The Office Action also draws attention to Uchiyama's Figure 3, and to the passage at column 2, lines 7-27. Uchiyama's Figure 2 is used in the reference to help explain conventional adaptive deferential pulse code modulation, or ADPCM. According to the reference, this is an iterative technique in which a digital amplitude value A_{n+1} is based on the immediately preceding digital amplitude value A_n, plus or minus a factor that is related to a quantizing width. As is shown in the bottom portion of Uchiyama's Figure 3, though, the result is not an amplitude-varying curve that "is calculated to a simply increasing or decreasing function" in accordance with claim 1. Instead, the prior art ADPCM technique shown in Uchiyama's Figure 3 involves a function with an increasing portion and a decreasing portion. Certainly, there is nothing in the reference to suggest an amplitude-varying curve that is calculated to a simply increasing or decreasing function.

For similar reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the "simply increasing or decreasing function" specified in claim 6 and the "monotonic increasing or monotonic decreasing function" specified in independent claim 11 are neither disclosed nor suggested by Uchiyama.

The remaining claims depend from the independent claims discussed above and recite additional limitations to further define the invention, so they are patentable along with the independent claims and need not be further discussed.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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